

Colorado Department of Education Creation of and Purposes for the New Accreditation Rules

A Brief History

House Bill 98-1267, mandating a new system of educational accreditation, took effect on July 1, 1998. Requirements of the new legislation necessitated repeal and reenactment of State Board of Education Rules for the Administration of the Accreditation of School Districts, 1 CCR 301-1. The Draft Rules were created over nine months, incorporating advice from many members of the Colorado education community.

Dr. Keith Blue and Dr. Gerry Difford, two of Colorado's most respected education leaders, were called upon by the Colorado Department of Education to solicit recommendations for new accreditation rules from their peers throughout the state from September through November, 1998. In December of 1998, the State Board of Education established "Accreditation Indicators" that formulated essential criteria for the new accreditation process.

Throughout the winter of 1999, a writing team at the Department of Education, led by Drs. Blue and Difford, constructed a preliminary draft for review by the State Board of Education. At its May 1999 meetings, the State Board approved the rules for distribution throughout the State.

The approved accreditation rules took effect on November 1, 1999. Approved rules gave school districts until June 30, 2000 to complete their accreditation contract with the Department of Education.

On June 30, 2002, Annual Accreditation Assessment Reports were completed by the Department of Education for each Colorado school district. The new district accreditation process is currently entering the second year.

Purposes of the Accreditation Rules

Purposes of the Accreditation Rules are to:

- foster greater accountability from public schools and school districts for the betterment of public education;
- provide a process for the State Board of Education to fulfill its constitutional responsibility for the general supervision of Colorado's public schools;
- encourage excellence by assessing student performance in relation to state standards and assessments;
- help all schools and school districts improve achievement for all students in safe schools;
- ensure equal access to educational opportunities for every student in the state;
- support local efforts to reform and restructure public education;

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- promote high standards, equal access, and educational opportunities for all students' academic growth; and
- develop and maintain a school and community partnership for the ongoing improvement of public education.